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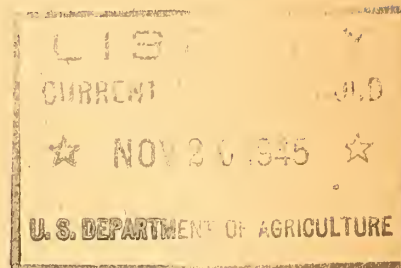
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Washington 25, D. C., November 1945

SESAME

A List of References

Compiled by Maude K. Swingle



Sesame shares with coconut oil the earliest record of use by civilized man. Herodotus reported field-scale culture of this crop in 450 B. C. The "Open Sesame" of the Arabian Nights shows the importance given it in early times. The women of Babylonia used the oil as a cosmetic as well as for food.

Index Kewensis lists 36 species of Sesamum from Africa, Brazil, British India, Crete, and the East Indies. The original home of S. indicum (orientale), commonly cultivated throughout the Tropics, is undetermined. The Imperial Agricultural Research Institute at Delhi, in search of favorable genes for breeding, has built up a collection of wild relatives of cultivated plants, including sesame. Seeds of sesame were brought from Africa to North America as early as the end of the seventeenth century by Negro slaves, and the plant grew well in the neighborhood of Charleston and is still found there.

The oil has high nutritive value and the oilcake used as feed gives excellent results. Recently the oil has been used with pyrethrum to increase its insecticidal efficiency; it has also been used as a vehicle for pollen injections for hay fever sufferers.

The seed has been reported to yield from 30 to 90 percent of its weight in oil. The world export of sesame seed before World War I was 666,000 tons, which had increased to 728,000 tons by 1933-34. In British India in 1926-27 the area planted to sesame was over 3 million acres with a yield of 225-500 pounds per acre. The bulk of the crop was for home consumption.

Critical original work on varieties of Sesamum and their distribution has been published in Russian. High interest in this crop in Latin America is indicated by the number of references found in journals from Central and South America.

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